

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
October 19, 2023

A meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was held on Thursday, October 19, 2023, at WILMAPCO, 100 Discovery Boulevard, Suite 800, Newark, DE 19713 and via video conference/conference call.

1. CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Tricia Arndt, Delaware Office of State Planning, and TAC Vice Chair, brought the TAC meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

2. TAC Members present:

Tricia Arndt, Delaware Office of State Planning
Cooper Bowers, Delaware Department of Transportation
David Dahlstrom, Maryland Department of Planning
Michael Fortner, City of Newark
Saeed Gunjal, DNREC
Gwineth Kaminsky, City of Wilmington Planning
Quinn Krenzler, Town of Elkton Planning
Matthew Littlejohn, Cecil County Division of Planning and Zoning
Rashad Pinckney, Maryland Department of Transportation
Catherine Salarano, Maryland Department of the Environment
Catherine Smith, Delaware Transit Corporation

TAC Ex-Officio Members present:

Enos Han, US Federal Highway Administration

TAC Members absent:

City of Wilmington Department of Public Works
Delaware Division of Small Business, Development, and Tourism
Delaware River and Bay Authority
New Castle County Department of Land Use
Maryland SHA Regional and Intermodal Planning Division

TAC Ex-Officio Members absent:

Amtrak
Diamond State Port Corporation
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Federal Transit Administration

Guests and Invitees:

Aviva Klugh, Maryland Department of Transportation

Staff:

Dan Blevins, Principal Planner
Heather Dunigan, Principal Planner
Sharen Elcock, Executive Assistant
Elizabeth Espinal, Administrative Assistant
Dave Gula, Principal Planner
Bill Swiatek, Principal Planner
Jake Thompson, Principal Planner

Dawn Voss, Outreach Coordinator
Tigist Zegeye, Executive Director

Minutes prepared by: Elizabeth Espinal.

3. MINUTES

Approval of the July 20, 2023, August 17, 2023, and September 21, 2023, TAC Minutes. TAC members held one vote for approval of all three minutes as there were no discussions or oppositions to be included.

ACTION: On motion by Mr. Mike Fortner and seconded by Ms. Gwinneth Kaminsky TAC approved the July 20, 2023, August 17, 2023, and September 21, 2023, TAC minutes.

Motion passed.

(10-19-23-01)

4. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

a. Nonmotorized Transportation Working Group

Ms. Heather Dunigan said the Nonmotorized Transportation Working Group met on October 3rd. The group reviewed the Bicycle Pedestrian Funding Pool Candidate Projects. They were pleased to note that there had been a total of seven project submissions, indicating a positive response to the call for projects. The group reached a consensus on the Draft Scoring for the projects, which had been prepared by WILMAPCO.

During the meeting, there were presentations on the Maryland Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan and the Maryland Transportation Plan. The group expressed the desire to see more projects in Cecil County included in both plans, as they felt that the current representation was somewhat limited. However, they did appreciate the fact that these two plans were being developed in coordination with each other, emphasizing the importance of having the Maryland Bike/Ped Plan aligned with the statewide plan.

Additionally, the group received an update from DeIDOT on East Coast Greenway projects, specifically focused on filling in gaps and upgrading routes in the Route 4 area to enhance safety and connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

None.

ACTION ITEMS

6. To Recommend Approval of the Technical Scoring Prioritization of the Delaware Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Candidate Projects

Ms. Heather Dunigan reviewed applications and draft prioritization for the statewide bicycle pedestrian funding pool. She noted that DeIDOT provided funding for all Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) applications last year and they decided not to include any TAP projects this year. A single TAP application was received, and Heather explained WILMAPCO has integrated it into the Bike/Ped funding pool for consideration.

Seven applications were received and ranked based on the TAP prioritization process criteria, with five from New Castle County, one from the Jefferson Street Center and Urban Bike Project, and one from the Town of Townsend. The draft scoring is Washington Street Bicycle and

Pedestrian Improvement (30 points), Foulkstone Pathway (16 points), Hockessin Colored School #107 Pathways (16 points), Glasgow to Lums Pond Pathway (14 points), Townsend Walkability Improvements (11 points), Commons Boulevard Pathway Phase IV (10 points), and Southern Park to Cedar Lane Pathways (9 points).

Mr. David Dahlstrom commented that Ms. Cathy Smith delivered an informative presentation on several route changes during the last meeting. He then asked Ms. Dunigan about the scoring process related to bus stop locations, specifically whether it considers changes in bus routes, or if it is based solely on the current routes. Ms. Dunigan explained that the scoring is based on current bus stop locations and usage, and we use the latest available data each year.

Ms. Cathy Smith added that there were two service changes that year, and all bus stop information was included in the FirstMap GIS. Additionally, she pointed out that they were considering bringing select trips on the Route 15 to the Hope Center. Many people living at the Hope Center and using services there use the shuttle service which connects to other DART routes at the Prices Corner Park and Ride.

Ms. Tricia Arndt suggested that Commons Boulevard project should receive two points for the community center criteria because it serves the Hope Center. Ms. Arndt also suggested that a fleet of bicycles be provided to the Hope Center. Ms. Dunigan responded that we welcome any recommendations from the TAC. She added that a bike share program there could be explored with the Urban Bike Project and Newark Bike Project.

ACTION: On a motion by Mr. Michael Fortner and seconded by Ms. Gwineth Kaminsky the TAC recommends approval of the Technical Scoring for Project Prioritization of the Delaware Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Candidate Projects with the modification to add two points for Community Center criteria for the Commons Blvd. Project.

Motion passed.

(10-19-23-02)

7. To Recommend Amendment of the FY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Ms. Heather Dunigan said Cecil County has requested that the TIP be amended to add preliminary engineering and right-of-way funds for the replacement of the Belvidere Road Bridge over CSX Railroad. The amendment relates to the ongoing partnership between Cecil County and MDOT on the new Belvidere Road I-95 interchange and upgrades to Belvidere Road to connect with a nearby industrial park.

ACTION: On a motion by Mr. Matthew Littlejohn and seconded by Mr. Michael Fortner the TAC recommends amendment of the FY 2023- 2026 TIP for the Replacement of the Belvidere Bridge CE0055 over CSX Railroad Project.

Motion passed.

(10-19-23-03)

8. To Recommend Amendment of the FY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Ms. Heather Dunigan said DeIDOT has requested that the TIP be amended to adjust funding for four projects:

1. SR4 and Harmony Road Intersection Improvements amendment defers construction funds.

2. Cedar Lane Road between Marl Pitt Road and Boyds Corner Road amendment defers all funding.
3. I-295 Northbound amendment increases construction funding.
4. I-95 Viaduct Substructure project increases construction funding.

Funding is deferred for the SR 4/Harmony Road and Cedar Lane projects to maintain fiscal constraint. Projects will be reviewed with the Air Quality Subcommittee at their next meeting.

ACTION: On a motion by Mr. Michael Fortner and seconded by Ms. Gwinneth Kaminsky the TAC recommends approval of the FY 2023- 2026 TIP amendments for all four DelDOT projects as presented.

Motion passed.

(10-19-23-04)

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

9. 2050 Maryland Transportation Plan

Ms. Aviva Klugh, the Strategic Planning Manager for the Maryland Department of Transportation in the Office of Planning and Capital Programs at the Secretary's Office, shared highlights about the Maryland Long Range Transportation Plan, known as the 2050 MTP, that is currently available for public comment until November 20th.

Ms. Klugh introduced the updated MTP titled, "The Playbook," with the tagline "Strategic Moves and Effective Results." The decision to rebrand the plan was influenced by the goals of the new administration and Secretary's initiatives, emphasizing that it was not just another routine update. The presentation outlined the plan's structure, divided into four sections: "Coaches Corner" for introduction, "Scouting Report" for data and trends, "Game Plan" for strategic direction, and "Team Record and Player Stats" for performance reporting. Four MTP goals were identified: enhancing safety and security, delivering system quality, promoting environmental stewardship, serving communities, and supporting the economy. Aviva elaborated on the MTP goals and the associated guiding principles, which included equity, resilience, preservation, modernization, and experience.

Key multimodal projects, referred to as "game changers," were highlighted as important projects requiring coordination and cooperation across various jurisdictions and agencies. Ms. Klugh provided the website (MDOT.Maryland.gov/MTP) as a resource for downloading the Draft Plan and submitting comments. Ms. Aviva explained that feedback received during the public comment period would be incorporated into the plan in November and December. The plan was scheduled for publication in January 2024.

Lastly, Ms. Aviva also mentioned that a separate update for the 2050 Maryland Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan was in progress and encouraged the audience to provide comments for that plan as well.

10. Newark Bicycle Plan

Ms. Heather Dunigan discussed the 10-year update to the 2014 Newark Bicycle Plan that is being developed through a collaboration between the city of Newark and Bike Newark. This update was seen as essential due to the completion of many projects from the 2014 plan and the evolving best practices in planning.

The presentation noted significant achievements since 2014, such as the completion of the pathway along Elkton Road, a new bicycle pedestrian bridge over the White Clay Creek, the Delaware Avenue Protected Bikeway, and various bike route improvements. The incorporation of wayfinding signage throughout the city was also highlighted.

Ms. Dunigan shared upcoming improvements, including a bicycle pedestrian bridge over I-95 at Rt. 896 and the connection between the new bridge over the White Clay and the Pomeroy Line, were discussed. The presentation touched upon planning efforts undertaken since 2014, particularly the Newark Transportation Improvement District (TID) project, which included numerous bicycle recommendations. Ms. Dunigan mentioned Newark's upgraded status from bronze to silver by the League of American Bicyclists.

Focus areas for the updated Bicycle Plan will include better connections between Bicycle Planning and Land Use, a bike parking assessment, safety planning with Vision Zero measures, equity considerations, sustainability, and setting plan priorities. Outreach efforts were described, including committee meetings, engagement with Newark City Council, and a comprehensive listening tour to gather input from various community members.

In 2023, the League of American Bicyclists (LAB) increased Newark's Bicycle Friendly Community rating from Bronze to Silver. The update will also evaluate recommendations from LAB's assessment of Newark including adopting Urban Bikeway Design Guidelines or NACTO guidelines, lowering speed limits on residential streets, improving bike parking, enhancing outreach to schools for bicycle safety education, launching a public bike share program, adopting a "Vision Zero" policy, and focusing on equity in planning and outreach. The presentation concluded by highlighting the ongoing efforts to gather community input and explore policy changes for mobility and bicycling in Newark.

Ms. Tricia Arndt inquired about the significance of green pavement markings on the first presentation slide. She specifically asked Ms. Dunigan the green color is used to indicate an area of mixed bicycle and automobile crossings. In response, Ms. Dunigan explained that the green bike lane was used in sections of the Delaware Ave. bikeway where there were driveways and intersections.

Ms. Arndt then brought up another slide showing asphalt and honeycomb patterns on the bikeway. She inquired about the significance of these patterns, aside from their visual appeal. Ms. Dunigan clarified that the honeycomb pattern was designed to represent the mascot of Newark High School, which is a bumblebee, making it a distinctive feature of the bikeway.

The conversation shifted to the level of recognition Newark had achieved for its bike-friendly initiatives. Ms. Arndt expressed her surprise that Newark was rated only at the Silver level and asked about the standards for achieving a Gold rating. Ms. Heather explained that reaching Gold status required significant investment in biking; of the total 506 Bicycle Friendly Communities, there are only 116 Silver, 36 Gold, and 5 Platinum.

INFORMATION ITEMS

11. Staff Report

Ms. Heather Dunigan reported the following updates:

- On October 4th Staff participated in Walk to School Day at Downes Elementary School.

- On October 10th Staff discussed prioritization for the Concord Pike Master Plan Monitoring Committee. The partners meet on October 19th and the first Monitoring Committee will be on November 8th.
- On October 10th Staff discussed project prioritization of this fiscal year, for the Churchman's Crossing Plan monitoring process. Staff and the partners on the management team meet again with the broader Partners at a meeting scheduled for October 19th and then followed by the full Monitoring Committee Meeting on October 25th.
- On October 10th Staff met the Conservation Advisory Committee for The Newark Bicycle Plan.
- On October 18th Wilmington Initiatives met and discussed community safety along S. Lincoln at Sycamore Street, pedestrian safety along Union and Lincoln streets and just the general high cost to the city of Wilmington in maintaining their responsibilities along state streets.
- Staff also met with researchers at the National Cooperative Highway Research Program about equity implementation implications of e-commerce and they showed interest in WILMAPCO's efforts to limit truck traffic in transportation justice communities.
- Staff partnered with DeIDOT to submit a grant application for the I-95 Cap Feasibility Project, to the reconnecting communities' federal program.
- On October 19th staff and consultants for The Kirkwood Highway Corridor Master Plan will have their second meeting with partners agencies.
- On October 21st, Staff will also be with Women's Transportation Seminar, which is a youth event to educate the kids on the planet planning principles.
- On October 23rd Staff will participate on the upcoming City Council meeting regarding the Newark Bike Plan.
- On October 26 staff and partners will have a Public Workshop for the East Elkton Plan. It will be at 6:00 PM in Elkton's Public Library.
- Staff participated in Cecil County, MDOT Free Tour meeting on September 20th and will also attend the MDOT Tour Meeting scheduled on October 31st.

OTHER BUSINESS:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

ACTION: Meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Attachments (0)